

Maintaining Vibrant Membership Breakout Room Report Summary

This document is a combination of reports out from breakout rooms at both the District Leadership Summit (DLS) and the Rotary Multi-District Training Institute (RMDTI)

Rotaract/Interact Specific

1. Examples of how Rotaract / Interact clubs will transition (are transitioning) during the pandemic?

- UHS Interact Laredo Texas (United High School)
 - April / May 2020 sponsored virtual AP (Advanced Placement) Exam Study Groups
 - Spring 2020 to ongoing – offering virtual tutoring to elementary and middle school students (with a parent or guardian present)
- University based Rotaract Clubs are not meeting yet as they are on summer break
- In Mexico there is a Rotaract Club that had a video competition online to raise money for medical equipment
- Luis Cavazos, 5930 said their R/I clubs are coming to their Rotary club meetings and co-mingling already. Great way to introduce them. Lots of a discussion about mentor/mentee relationships between Rotary and Rotaract/Interact clubs
- Get Rotaract clubs involved with what the Rotary club is doing early on, especially newly chartered. Invite to meetings, service projects, etc.
- Discussed how some clubs are resistant with having the “younger” Rotaractors join their club and the discussion opened up to club model flexibility. Rotaractors can form new clubs or transition into Rotary clubs via Satellite clubs or Cause-based clubs now that clubs have the ability to be more flexible.
- For some the transition has been eased with technology.
- Communication tools have been a boon.
- Serving during pandemic, food shelves, etc.

2. What is “the new normal” for Rotaract / Interact clubs?

- Virtual / online meetings
- They will be looking for ways to serve their communities with social distancing
- John Locke, D6250 said Wisconsin clubs are starting to go back to school so the new norm will be with masks on and social distancing
 - *We ran out of time and didn't finish the question
- Use of technology

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- Availability of virtual meetings (Some clubs have been experimenting already)
- Find ways to stay engaged, even with physical restrictions.
- Hybrid meetings will be interactive. Young people will adapt rapidly.
- New normal changes every day. New normal is flexibility, “normal” will change weekly or daily.
- We are entering a period of hyper-activism. Young people, especially, will be more willing to be active with making changes. We need to take advantage of that to draw them into projects that Rotary supports. People are starting have discussions about moving to another level in our society. We can reach out and provide a channel for positive activism. Great opportunity for issue/cause- based clubs.
- Is our current form of Rotary appealing to young people?
- Some schools cannot meet without the advisor Move from school-based to community-based.

3. How can we continue to engage Rotaract / Interact clubs during the pandemic?

- Keep / make a connection between the Rotary Club and Rotaract Club
- Working with the Interact School Advisor, work to keep a connection between the Rotary Club and Interact Club
- Support them
- Listen to their ideas
- Provide ideas
- Explore new ideas
- Explore Technologies, i.e. Slack, FaceBook Live, YouTube, MS Team, etc.
 - Rotaractors might also look at Google Meets, FaceBook Rooms, etc.
- Make them feel that they are involved with their sponsor club
- Look for opportunities for community based Rotaract Clubs
- Why not attend each other’s meetings – Rotaract attend Rotary and vice versa.
- Treat Rotaract members as equals.
- Actually talk to them. Continue to communicate
- Share and promote resources in the RI Learning Center, for both Rotaract and Interact.
- List as honorary club member.
- Find out what made them want to be a club, us that info to start another club.
- Big challenge with Interact
 - School policies vary
 - Not all schools have started back up yet
- Invite both Interact and Rotaract Advisers to attend your virtual meetings.
- A Rotaract Club invited their sponsor club to their virtual meeting.
 - The Rotaract Club produced a film “Raising Daisies”
 - Their sponsor club was invited to the “premier viewing” of the film.

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- Invite your Rotaract Clubs to attend your meetings with inspirational speakers and fun socials.
- Have joint Rotaract/Rotary Club virtual meetings on occasion.

4. What advantages do we have now for Rotaract / Interact clubs during the pandemic?

- They can still meet, even if their school is virtual
- Rotaractors and Interactors, in many cases, are already using virtual tools and are generally comfortable with them
- Rotaract Clubs could connect with other Rotaract Clubs
- Electronic media, ability to connect virtually
They have already been using social media for service projects/ fundraising, etc. It's been less of a change for Rotaract/Interact clubs introducing them to the new norm (for now)
- For some it may be easier to meet online. Attendance in some situations has been better in a virtual mode.
- Participation in service projects has been continued (e.g., highway clean up)
- They seem to be experienced with technology.
- Because we are in a virtual world we can bring in speakers from all over the world.
- Young people need to feel needed so if a club is struggling with technology, asking for help might make them feel needed.
- Opportunities for young people looking for an opportunity to make a difference at this time. As much as we feel virtual world hinders connections, it also opens the door to communications that we had in person. Online mentoring for Rotaractors and Interactors online.
- Since both clubs and Rotaract are meeting virtually, have them meet together about diversity. All can learn together on this, maybe even use Ted Talks.
- Speakers meeting virtually. Not a possibility in the past.
- Interactors able to attend lunch Rotary Club meetings virtually.
- Able to connect with people outside the geographic area.
- Transition to community-based clubs, at least in the interim
- Invite Rotaract/Interact to Club meetings.

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General Membership Engagement During COVID- 19 Pandemic

1. What has been the impact of the crisis on your clubs?

- Not seeing some of the members while meeting virtually
- Some clubs are seeing an increase in participation (no travel times)
- Some clubs have responded in a positive way and are thriving

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- Some clubs are losing members
- Membership interaction lowered
- Attendance is down 50% in some clubs
- 10% of the club members resigned due to lost jobs, inability to pay dues and meals, took a job in another town, moved to another town
- Some club members had “Zoom resistance,” so they quit participating
- Losing older members was a “wake up call” that the club needs to get busy finding younger members.
- Significant difference in level of engagement of individuals; people leaving because they don’t feel engaged.
- Some membership impact not yet measured.
- Defining effective way to raise funds.
- Finding online version of fundraisers, like virtual walks/runs.

2. What has been the response of your clubs to the crisis?

- Some clubs polled their members to get their input
- Some clubs are looking for innovative ways to engage their members and serve their communities
- More community engagement since we need each other more than ever.
- Leveraging PI and a budget to promote clubs (who want help) on Facebook with ads
- Finding new way to contact the club and the public
- Adapting and becoming more flexible
- Use strategies to get our older members engaged again
- Seek out younger members to invigorate the club
- District purchased Zoom Pro Accounts for all clubs
- Gave each club \$1000 to spend on a COVID related project
- Gift cards for food, PPEs for hospitals, food for Food Bank, etc.
- District offered Clubs the opportunity to apply for grants of \$1600 for a COVID project
- Purchasing masks and school supplies.
- Contact tracking system to get trained & to coordinate with our founding membe, who is the City of FB’s chief medical officer.
- Collect school supplies for teachers.
- Seeing some Hybrid clubs in 5910.
- See what is being discussed. One hybrid; one frozen. Reaching out to frozen club.

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- Looking for opportunities to serve.
 - Assisting local food giveaways
 - Assisting the local food pantry to record who receives assistance, while practicing safe distancing practices/masking.
 - Assisting local food banks and other agencies with their immediate needs.
- Some clubs are Zooming (virtually meeting only), some are “Hybrid” (meeting virtually and in person), some are not meeting at all.
- 5810 clubs meeting in hybrid fashion – invested in better equipment, especially to improve audio. Some clubs virtual only even still; one club is struggling and will need more AG attention.
- One club rep says her club is not doing much – president is a banker as is VP. Enmeshed with the PPP loans; so this member started zoom meetings with poor attendance. This is a club of about 20 active members in Texas, near Austin.
- International partnership in Liberia, COVID response, adding another in Honduras.
- Serving only outside, not inside. Making sandwiches for homeless at home
- Providing PPE.

3. What are the best practices you have seen in club response to the crisis?

- Continuing service projects while practicing social distancing
- Meeting virtually
- Holding “joint” virtual meetings with other clubs
 - In Same City
 - Across district “areas”
 - Across Districts
 - International
- Holding virtual socials
 - Fun and Music
 - Games
- Making members feel important
- Holding virtual / online fundraisers / silent auctions
- Making sure there is some sense of momentum
- Keeping members active and engaged
- Calling every member
 - “How are you doing?” should be the first questions
 - Are there ways to serve your members?
- Continue meeting virtually. Some clubs moved fast and leveraged members who were tech savvy to mobilize quickly to virtual
- Bob Mayber said that their club created a virtual meeting type task force and each person was responsible for contacting 5 ppt in their club to ensure they were able to connect to the online meetings.

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- Utilizing online platforms such as Zoom and GoToMeeting
- Placing Zoom Meeting link on Facebook Page and website to invite guests to attend. (Note: Some clubs felt this left them vulnerable to unwanted guests. The suggestion was to leave an email or telephone number on social media for potential guest to call to receive a meeting link.)
- Giving funds to clubs for technology and/or COVID-19 service projects.
- Logging on and staying engaged with Zoom.
- Meeting, collecting funds, and using Foundation resources.
- Become nimble in responding to the situation and making decisions.
- Start District Membership Committee – sooner with more members (14)
- Seems easier to communicate today.
- Opportunities for cooperation and partnership with corporations.
- Rotary Clubs helping people get high-speed internet by meeting with apartment complexes, businesses, and churches.
- Provide tablets to children without technology.
- Host professional meetings
 - Start meetings on time.
 - Have great and inspirational speakers
 - Have the speaker first, followed by club business (more attractive to your Zoom guests)
- “Service”
 - We remain all about service
 - Look for ways to provide service in the time of COVID-19
 - Some service may now be provided by “writing a check”
 - Consider partnering with other clubs.
 - One club partnered with another club and they did educational videos for Kenya on handwashing, wearing masks, and staying safe during COVID-19. (Then, there was a club program about this service project that was better attended virtually than their “normal” club meetings.)
- Every meeting talk about what you doing to stay engaged.
- Outstanding speakers even on Zooms; and use SOCIAL breakouts just to see some members. Useful in a big club, create 10 person breakouts; about 10 minutes each. One large club has weekly business meeting instead of Rotary specific; wine tasting; social breakfasts; board meetings opened up.
- Communication is key, being thoughtful about challenges, Zoom, etc.
- Reduced membership fees for members in financial need.
- Personal phone calls to all members.

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4. What else can be done to assist clubs?

- In some District Offices, technical assistance was offered to get clubs connected to online technology
- Assistant Governors in area could assist clubs with online technology, lending help with Zoom.
- OWL 360 Camera and Mic system was being used in hybrid meetings. This meets the needs of those who prefer staying at home and for those who are eager to meet in person. There is an expense. However, it is meeting all needs of members of clubs using this technology.
- First have to help the club before they can help the community
- We have a role to serve our community, so first have to engage our members
- Clubs should understand their “Why” first, then they can get to their “What” they need to do
- Realizing we don’t know the answer for every member
- Keep programs interesting
- Create a task force at District level to identify clubs that are struggling to stay engaged right now and assist with getting online
- Reach out to clubs via email, phone – to see what THEIR needs are. Help them know the resources and techniques like developing goals, action plan, even developing Membership Committees
- Find ways to help the non-tech savvy learn how to use electronic communication media – help assess what equipment they have, how to use it best
- Offer discounted or subsidized Zoom accounts, or “share” the license.
- Rotary Network – help with jobs. Back to Basics of Rotary
- District Friday night Happy Hour – Games
- Help clubs transition back (members at high risk). Educate clubs.
- Have a couple of clubs meet together and do joint meetings. Helps to share success with each other so we continue to learn and engage everyone.
- Reach out to members and clubs in the district. Everyone needs to be contacted.
- Some clubs not reporting and some not meeting. E-Club provided zoom service to clubs not meeting.
- District provided & conducted Zoom meeting for club not meeting.
- Reach out to clubs that are having difficult times with using the technology to meet virtually.
- Invite the non-meeting clubs/members to attend another club’s virtual meeting/activity.
- Send out one-on-one safe practice assistance to the clubs that are not meeting.
- Introduce them to Zoom “one-on-one” to show them “how easy it is to use the technology” available to them for their club to meet virtually.

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- Contact other clubs for help – joint meetings, discuss with other clubs what has worked. Help them find program ideas. Contact members in SOME way to make sure they are well and get ideas from them as to what would be helpful.
- Help clubs with the technology if that is the barrier.
- Let clubs know that they have help from the District, DG, DMC, etc.
- “How do we now who is having difficulty?”

5. What are some of the barriers that you see to engaging Rotarians?

- Not comfortable with the technology (i.e. Zoom)
- Members could be financially impacted (i.e. their business is impacted by the pandemic).
- Not holding interesting programs
- Keeping members active and engaged
- Lack of leadership at the club level. Clubs that were struggling before are more affected now.
- Lack of use and knowledge of technology
- Rural areas are limited in connection capabilities and have internet service issues.
- Clubs have to reimage/pivot to projects that are possible/safe now
- Fundraising – Less money coming in now
- Getting some clubs to meet at all. Maintaining interactivity with members. Smaller and medium clubs better able to maintain direct activity like in-person service, and finding meeting places.
- 70 years and older members in some clubs are unwilling to embrace the online platforms
- Members still not comfortable in participating service projects or gatherings because of COVID-19
- Some Rotarians do not know how to use the technology.
- Some older members have withdrawn and stayed at home and have just quit communicating with the club

Note: Some clubs were finding that members with mobility issues were embracing the online platforms and enjoying the weekly meetings. Some clubs are seeing an increase in service project activity.

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6. What are the things that you can do to overcome these barriers?

- Working with “willing” members on getting comfortable with the technology
- An opportunity to keep costs down for members (no food costs)
- Plan innovation/interesting programs/speakers
- Live up virtual meetings, i.e. Sporcle (party app) or mybingocards.com
- An opportunity to invite speakers from outside your area
- Plan “meetings,” “socials,” etc. with a “purpose” – have some structure
- Need strong club leadership
- Continue to offer options for meetings, service, and socials. Get creative and see what works best for your club.
- For rural areas with limited technology – clubs can come together and socially distance at a new location like a park or parking lot
- Find ways – possibly in smaller groups – to share activities, like tasting event, meditation.
 - think outside the box
 - help support local businesses with funds they have
 - give clubs a refund for their dues
- Grants for membership
- Set up a phone tree and call Rotarians weekly to just ask how they are doing
- Offer to pick them up and take them to the meeting, or help with errands
- Let members know your club is meeting and following the policies for safety (social distancing, masks, etc.)
- Offer to bring them to your home to watch the club Zoom meeting